(xi) Conversion of all existing rail lines into broad gauge and dobuling of the main trunk route from New Jalpaiguri to Dibrugarh and also expansion of cargo handling capacity at certain distribution points.

(xii) Rail transit facilities through Bangladesh to West Bengal for movement of men/materials from/to Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur.

(xiii) MECL to take up exploration work on promotional basis to be funded by the Ministry of Mines as also by NEMDF.

(c) All such recommendations made by any Committee set up by the Government are processed in consultation with the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance and other concerned Ministries in accordance with the established procedure in the Government.

Fixation of Royalty Rates of Orissa Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan

2102. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan have approved the recent fixation of royalty rates;

(b) whether there is reduction of royalty from Rs. 25 crores to Rs. 7 crores in respect of Orissa; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) Revision of rates of royalty on major minerals is carried out as per the provisions of Section 9(3) of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957. The rates of royalty on major minerals (other than coal and lignite) have already been revised vide Govt. Gazette Notification GSR No. 214(E) dated 11.4.1997. The revision of royalty rates was effected on the basis of the recommendations of the Study Group constituted for the purpose. The Study Group had detailed consultations with the State Governments, including Governments of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan etc., Mineral industry and other agencies in the matter. It is estimated that on account of revision of royalty, the revenue accruals to Government of Orissa would increase by about Rs. 10 crores (on the level of production and price of 1994-95).

National Project on bio-gas development in Bihar

2103. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are implementing National project on bio-gas development in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total number of family type and community type biogas plants set up in the State during the last five years, year-wise; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to popularise biogas plants in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b). Under the National Project on Biogas Development (NPBD), a target of setting up of 1500 family type biogas plants has been allocated to the State Government of Bihar for 1997-98. Besides, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), All India Women's Conference and South Asia Partnership-India are also implementing NPBD in the States.